Original scientific paper

SIMILAR CULTURE, DIFFERENT TOURIST BEHAVIOR? RESULTS FROM CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH ON THE TOURIST BEHAVIOR OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

Jan ZÁVODNÝ POSPÍŠIL[a], Duarte XARA-BRASIL[b], Lucie Sára ZÁVODNÁ[a]

[a] Faculty of Management, Prague University of Economics and Business, Department of Management Jarošovská 1117/II, 377 01 Jindřichův Hradec, Czech Republic, phone: +420 776 136 706, +420 774 844 618, e-mail: jan.zavodny@vse.cz, lucie.zavodna@vse.cz
[b] College of Business Administration, Polytechnic Institute of Setubal, Department of Marketing and Logistics, Campus do IPS - Estefanilha, 2910-761 Setúbal, Portugal, phone: +351 265 709 300, e-mail: duarte.brasil@esce.ips.pt

Cite this article: Závodný Pospíšil, J., Xara-Brasil, D., Závodná, L.S. (2023). Similar Culture, Different Tourist Behavior? Results from Cross-Cultural Research on the Tourist Behavior of College Students. *Deturope,* 15, (1), 4-22.

Abstract

The paper aims to enhance the understanding of the behavior of international tourists; this study (1) determines if cultural differences exist between Portuguese, Brazilian, Mexican, and Colombian college students; (2) if these students differ in their travel preferences; (3) examines if horizontal/vertical individualism correlates with the students' travel preferences. A psychographic approach based on value orientations was used to understand the relationship between travel preferences and the students' cultural tendencies to horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism. The results showed that Portuguese, Brazilian, Mexican, and Colombian students have similar cultural dimensions at the societal level but differ at the individual cultural level. Although their tourist preferences differ fundamentally, no significant evidence of a relationship between the cultural tendencies and the tourist behavior of the measured samples of students has been found. The paper uses a combination of known and proven methods to obtain and process primary data. The findings provide new insights that can enhance the current knowledge of tourism research and marketing. The paper's results imply the need to revise the current understanding of differences in cultural tendencies on tourist behavior. However, it is necessary to consider some limitations arising from the sample selection and cultural tendencies measurement methods.

Keywords: Tourist Behavior; Cultural Differences; Portugal; Brazil; Mexico; Colombia.

INTRODUCTION

As with most customer service businesses, almost all travel destinations have to perceive and reflect the needs and desires of tourists. Understanding travelers' behavior is crucial for developing a strategy and service delivery. The presence of a large number and variety of travel destinations coupled with the expected market changes in the post-covid era reinforces the need to understand travelers' tourist behavior.

As part of the tourism business, South American tourists, or same language speaking tourists, are often perceived as one homogeneous segment (e.g., Ezeuduji et al., 2016; Kruger & Snyman, 2017; Park et al., 2008). However, South American, as well as the same language speaking countries may have different cultural backgrounds, which in turn affect the personality traits of their citizens to a certain extent (McCrae & Terracciano, 2005). In addition, in the case of countries that show similar cultural tendencies, there may be differences between the cultural tendencies of society on the one hand and the individual on the other (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). A separate problem is a difference in verticality and horizontality in cultural tendencies in the case of individualistic and collectivist countries (Sakakida et al., 2004).

Therefore, this study aims to expand the knowledge base of college students' travel preferences by analyzing their value orientation. Brazilian, Colombian, Mexican, and Portuguese college students' travel preferences were measured in this study and compared with their value orientations. Subsequently, the significance of the influence of value orientations on the form of tourist behavior is determined. It can be assumed that this approach analysis will provide a better understanding of cross-cultural tourist preferences.

The present study (1) determines if cultural differences exist between Brazilian, Colombian, Mexican, and Portuguese college students; (2) if the college students from these countries differ in their travel preferences; (3) examines if horizontal/vertical individualism, respectively collectivism, correlates with the students' travel preferences.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Tourism is considered *"a global marketplace where destinations market to and host visitors from different national cultures"* (Huang & Crotts, 2018). However, what remains unclear is the extent to which national cultural differences should be considered when reaching and serving these markets. At one end of the spectrum of opinions is the idea of a "global consumer" who shares common behavior, including a set of values and preferences (e.g., Coles et al., 2004; Dann, 1993; Dwyer, 2004). It is mostly believed that this is due to acculturation – the process by which individuals learn and accept the norms and values of a culture different from the one in which they grew up (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007; Yu et al., 2021). As a result, global consumer segments arise while associating similar meanings with certain places, people, and things (Alden et al., 1999). Such tourists are considered less affected by cultural, social, and other factors during their consumer behavior (Keillor et al., 2001).

On the other hand, it is believed that human nature is much more complex (de Mooij & Beniflah, 2017). Therefore, the idea of a global consumer emerged from a narrow focus of the original North American studies rather than from a correct understanding of consumer divergences (Goodwin et al., 2020). Although international tourists may show similarities in the choice of destinations when using the selected destinations, they are influenced by preferences partly based on their common social or cultural values (McKercher & Du Cros, 2003; Macleod, 2006; Torres et al., 2014).1 The need to recognize the behavior of tourists from heterogeneous cultures, their preferences, and choices then becomes an important issue for the success of an international destination (Soldatenko & Backer, 2019).

Hearing these calls, cultural influences on travel behavior began to be investigated by many researchers (Özdemir & Yolal, 2017; Litvin et al., 2004; Reisinger & Turner, 1997; etc.). These researchers mostly used knowledge from the field of cross-cultural research. Although the inceptions of cross-cultural research can be traced back to the 19th century, its contemporary form did not begin until the mid-1960s (Lonner, 2000). To this day, the best-known and most used framework for measuring national cultural differences is based on five dimensions of culture presented by Hofstede (2001). Although his research was originally created to measuring workplace values, it has been applied to many academic disciplines in hundreds of studies (Pizam & Fleischer, 2005). It's necessary to remember that this is not the only concept. There is a wide range of other models for measuring national cultural differences (e.g., Bond, 1988; Trompenaars, 1993; Stewart, 1971; etc.). The latest version of Hofstede's framework is based on a cross-cultural research study of IBM employees from 40 countries. Five, respectively, six dimensions distinguishing people from various national cultures were derived from the research (Huang & Crotts, 2018). These dimensions are Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), Long-term orientation (LTO), and Indulgence (IND) (Hofstede et al., 2005; Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

It could be argued that differences among national cultures cannot be easily understood and the consequences of these cannot be considered without considering all the dimensions. As Pizam and Fleischer (2008) claim, based on their extensive research, not all constructs directly influence every behavior and often become latent depending upon the situation. In this sense, the different levels of national cultures would be specifically reflected in tourist behavior. For example, people from high UAI cultures (Hofstede et al., 2005) would prefer to participate in safe tourist activities that are well-planned and organized (Pizam & Fleischer, 2008). This will also be very similar in the collectivist, respectively individualistic, cultural orientation of travelers. For instance, according to Kim and Lee (2000), representatives of

high IDV cultures are more likely to seek newness when traveling, while those from collectivist (low IDW) cultures are instead to travel to be with family (Kim & Lee, 2000). Moreover, consumers from a collectivistic culture background also tend to avoid uncertainty (Hofstede, 2001).

When using the results of the analysis of collectivism and individualism of the studied cultures, the greatest danger is a uniform view of the representatives of the given culture. McSweeney (2002) stated that usage of an "average" score of culture dimensions across a whole population tends to produce inaccurate, narrow, and arbitrary results (McSweeney, 2002). In this regard, applying an "average culture" in tourism research may be unreliable or even invalid (Ahn & McKercher, 2018). However, this does not mean that the given cultural tendencies cannot be identified on an individual level (Triandis, 1995). The condition is to use an appropriate tool for measuring. Although Hofstede's framework is not employable on the individual levels, the other tools may be (Ahn & McKercher, 2018).

There is also a tendency to perceive individualism and collectivism in clear dichotomies (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). In that sense, then the representatives of cultures with a similar degree of collectivism/individualism should have similar traits. However, according to Triandis (1995), collectivism and individualism are polythetic constructs, and therefore can be defined by four attributes. Different species of these constructs can also be defined by additional attributes (Triandis, 1995). Singelis et al. (1995) defined that vertical collectivism (VC) involves perceiving oneself as constituent part of a collective, where the individual respects inequalities within the collective. On the contrary, horizontal collectivism (HC) also includes considering the self as part of the collective, whereas an individual perceives and wants to perceive others as equal. In the case of vertical individualism (VI), one is perceived as an autonomous unit, which at the same time accepts existing inequalities between people. Horizontal individualism (HI), conversely, describes a given autonomous individual as focused on equality (Darwish & Huber, 2003). Simply put, the value of a horizontal cultural difference can be defined as valuing equality, while the second value, the vertical cultural difference, emphasizes hierarchy (Shavitt et al., 2011).

When this concept has been applied over the last 30 years, it has found widespread use in many research fields, including consumer psychology and marketing science (Sivadas et al., 2008). Integrating the cultural dimensions into tourism behavior research can contribute hugely to practitioners when creating future marketing strategies (Han et al., 2017). Together with personal background and social, political, and economic factors, the cultural dimensions of individualism/collectivism can help understand the tourist behavior of travelers from different cultures (Sakakida et al., 2004; Meng, 2010). Adding another dimension of

horizontality/verticality into this concept may increase the accuracy of the measurement of cultural differences.

Cultural dimensions such as HI (Horizontal Individualism), VC (Vertical Collectivism), HC (Horizontal Collectivism), and VI (Vertical Individualism) have been found to impact various aspects of tourist behavior. Studies have shown that these dimensions influence destination choices, travel motivations, travel behavior patterns, satisfaction levels, and behavioral intentions of tourists (Huang & Crotts, 2018; Woodsideet al., 2011; Li et al., 2011). For instance, individualism-collectivism has been found to significantly affect tourists' preferences for activities, social interactions, and overall travel experiences (Kim & Lee, 2000). Moreover, cultural orientations have been shown to influence decision-making processes, including destination selection, accommodation choices, and information source utilization during trip planning (Li et al., 2011).

Within the tourism market, the concept of individualism/collectivism (IDV/COL) is best used to measure tourism behavior differences between Asian and Western countries since the differences in IDV/COL level are considered to be the greatest (Turner, 2003). On average, Asian cultures are considered more collectivistic, while Western cultures are mostly individualistic (Goncalo & Staw, 2006). However, based on Hofstede's (2016) results, even some "Western" countries in Europe are more collectivistic. Although they may share a common language, some countries from different continents with different historical backgrounds or social, political, and economic factors can have very similar IDV/COL dimensions. This is precisely the case in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Portugal, which, according to Hofstede (2016), have almost identical IDV/COL levels (alphabetically by country): 38, 13, 30, 27.

According to IDV/COL levels, tourists from Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Portugal, except for their countries' socio-geographical differences, should be treated as one consumer group with relatively similar travel preferences. Based on these assumptions, and following the above theoretical knowledge, the following research assumptions were determined:

H1: There is a statistically significant difference between the cultural tendencies of Brazilian, Colombian, Mexican, and Portuguese college students.

H2: There is a statistically significant difference between the travel preferences of Brazilian, Colombian, Mexican, and Portuguese college students.

H3: There is a correlation between the cultural tendencies and travel preferences of Brazilian, Colombian, Mexican, and Portuguese college students.

METHODS

A survey was conducted using a convenient sample of Portuguese, Brazilian, Mexican, and Colombian students. Students from each country were always from one college and were majoring in Business Economics. College students are often used in cross-cultural studies because they are considered to have comparable demographic characteristics (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997; Flere & Lavrič, 2008) and are considered as an easily reachable homogenous group for the survey (Murray et al., 2013). Although the mass use of college students in surveys raises questions about the sample relevancy (Bello et al., 2009), this was not an issue for this research since the aim was to measure students' behavior as a primary group. Also, when applying general good practice into the research, the results, which emerged using the sample consisted of college students, could be generalized (Ashraf & Merunka, 2017).

A total of 640 questionnaires were distributed, with 555 included for analysis. Questionnaires were distributed by collaborating colleagues at respective universities to the entire class during teaching sessions. Completion was voluntary, which resulted in a portion of the questionnaires being returned either partially filled or left unfilled. These incomplete questionnaires were subsequently excluded from the subsequent data analysis. As a result, a variable response rate was observed, with 133 respondents from Portugal, 146 from Brazil, 150 from Mexico, and 126 from Colombia completing the questionnaires.

The questionnaire was first written in English and then translated into Spanish and Portuguese taking into consideration local language differences. The translation correctness was then verified using the back-translation method (Werner & Campbell, 1970).

To measure the students' *cultural tendencies* and travel preferences, a questionnaire based on Sakakida et al. (2004) was reconstructed. This was a combination of two separate questionnaire tools when measuring cultural differences between American and Japanese students — tourists. The instrument for measuring the cultural tendencies of HI, VI, HC, and VC was developed by Triandis and Gelfand (1998). This is a frequently used instrument consisting of 16 scenarios, where each situation has four possible solutions. The interviewee then selects the two answers most relevant to them, ranking them hierarchically according to his/her accord with the answer. Each of the answers represents one of the four basic cultural tendencies. As a result, there is a less biased view of the respondent’s individualistic or collectivist tendencies, as could be the case with the answers recorded on the Likert scale (Triandis et al., 1998).

The second part of the questionnaire, which examines students' *travel preferences*, was based on Plog's classic psychographic model (Plog, 1974). The original model was designed

to explain psychographic characteristic influence over the destination using the bipolar continuum of personality types – allocentric/psychocentric. For this purpose, eight travel preferences are examined based on the attributes of allocentric and psychocentric travel preferences suggested within Plog's theoretical model (1974, 1991). The items are measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with 1 representing "not at all desirable" and 7 representing "extremely desirable." On this basis, the continuum can be divided into five segments: a) allocentric, b) near-allocentric, c) mid-centric, d) near-psychocentric, and e) psychocentric (Park et al., 2010). Although there has also been a critique of the tool (Smith, 1990) in terms of using the model to measure the student population, the model is functional and has the additional potential for further use (Griffith & Albanese, 1996). A relatively large number of authors have studied Plog's model over the years, so sufficient situations are described in which the model is effective and when it less so. In general, it can be said that the model does not take into account the motivations, activities, and mode of transport of the traveler (Litvin and Smith, 2016). On the other hand, in cases where the goal is to measure personality predictors of tourist behavior, the model is irreplaceable (e.g., Griffith & Albanese, 1996; Litvin & Smith, 2016; Cruz-Milan, 2017; Merritt et al., 2018).

By combining the mentioned tools, a questionnaire with 27 questions was created. Of these, three questions asked the age and gender of the respondents, as well as their college. Questionnaires were distributed in printed form and were filled out during the class in the teacher's presence. Participants were treated in accordance with the ethical guidelines set out by the American Psychological Association (2009).

RESULTS

A total of 555 Portuguese, Brazilian, Mexican, and Colombian students participated in the study. On average, the sample included almost the same proportion of females (n = 287; 52%) and males (n = 268; 48%) with ages ranging from 17 to 29 (M = 20.00, SD = 1.75). However, there were more significant gender differences in the samples from individual countries, as described below. The Portuguese sample consisted of 133 students (81 females, 61% and 52 males, 39 %) with ages ranging from 18 to 26 (M = 20, SD = 1.92). The Brazilian sample consisted of 146 students (73 females, 50% and 73 males, 50%) with ages ranging from 18 to 29 (M = 21, SD = 1.86). The Mexican sample consisted of 150 students (50 females, 33% and 67 males, 67%) with ages ranging from 17 to 27 (M = 20, SD = 1.69). The Colombian sample consisted of 126 students (83 females, 66% and 43 males, 34%) with ages ranging from 18 to 29 (M = 20, SD = 1.38).

The Culture Orientation Scale (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) was employed to measure horizontal and vertical orientation, as well as individualism and collectivism. At the international level, the cultures of the studied countries are described as collectivist (e.g., Hofstede, 2001) although it is possible to describe the culture as individualistic at the individual level. The specific results of the degree of individualism for students from each country were as follows (ordered by the highest value): Colombian 69%, Mexican 65%, Portuguese 61%, and Brazilian 51%. The individual level of collectivism and individualism is thus significantly different from the collective level, according to Hofstede (2016) when p=0.002.

Tab. 1 shows the mean scores of the Portuguese, Brazilian, Mexican, and Colombian students in HI, VI, HC, and VC. As the results show, the highest values were measured for Horizontal Individualism for all the countries, while the lowest values are for Vertical Collectivism. An ANOVA (Single Factor) test was performed to determine if there are statistically significant differences in the results of individual countries. As the results show, the fundamental differences were measured in the level of Horizontal Individualism and Collectivism (for both $p = 0.00$; where $\alpha = 0.05$). On the contrary, in Vertical Collectivism, the results of individual countries were almost identical ($p = 0.77$).

Table 1 The mean scores of the Portuguese, Brazilian, Mexican, and Colombian students in HI, VI, HC, and VC

CULTURAL TENDENCIES	SAMPLE	N	MEAN	SD	ANOVA F	ANOVA F crit	*p* Value*
HI	Portuguese	133	6.39	1.93	15.88	2.62	0.00
	Brazilian	146	5.72	1.97			
	Mexican	156	6.88	2.10			
	Colombian	128	7.27	1.83			
VI	Portuguese	133	3.32	1.60	2.36	2.62	0.07
	Brazilian	146	3.27	1.61			
	Mexican	156	3.59	1.62			
	Colombian	128	3.71	1.57			
HC	Portuguese	133	4.32	1.64	38.92	2.62	0.00
	Brazilian	146	4.95	1.62			
	Mexican	156	3.27	1.69			
	Colombian	128	3.15	1.59			
VC	Portuguese	133	1.84	1.34	0.38	2.62	0.77
	Brazilian	146	1.99	1.36			
	Mexican	156	1.95	1.20			
	Colombian	128	1.87	1.25			

NOTE: HI = Horizontal Individualism; HC = Horizontal Collectivism; VI = Vertical Individualism; VC = Vertical Collectivism. The data were based on the first choices of the participants.
** p is significant at the .05 level*

To determine the significance of individual differences in HI and HC values between the countries, the Tukey-Kramer Post Hoc Test after One-Way ANOVA was conducted. As shown in Tab. 2, only students from Mexico and Colombia did not show significant differences in Horizontal Collectivism. In addition, the students from Mexico and Portugal did not show any differences in Horizontal Individualism. However, significant differences were measured in the HI and HC levels between students from other countries.

Table 2 The significance of individual differences in HI and HC values between the countries

Compared Pairs of Countries		Brazil – Portugal	Mexico – Portugal	Portugal – Colombia	Brazil – Colombia	Mexico – Brazil	Mexico – Colombia
Cultural tendencies	**HC**	**4.51**	**7.63**	**8.11**	**12.74**	**12.47**	0.82
	HI	**4.01**	2.94	**5.06**	**9.13**	**7.15**	2.31
	VI	0.36	2.00	2.77	3.18	2.42	0.87
	VC	1.31	1.02	0.27	1.02	0.31	0.73

Critical Values of Studentized Range Distribution(q) for Familywise ALPHA = .05; *df=3.68.*

The student's travel preferences were measured using Plog's (1974) (allocentrism/psychocentrism) model. Tab. 3 shows the mean scores of the allocentric/psychocentric preferences of the four samples. The respondents from all four countries significantly favored allocentric types of travel (p = 0.00) more than psychocentric types. However, between the individual situations of Plog's 8-point scenario, the respondents' answers from individual countries fundamentally differed. As can be seen in the results of the ANOVA test shown in Tab. 3, apart from two situations ("*Travel to adventurous destination*" and "*Package tour when I travel*"), the behavior declared by tourist students was fundamentally different across the countries.

Table 3 The mean scores of the allocentric/psychocentric preferences of the samples

Travel preferences		Brazil Portugal	Mexico Portugal	Portugal Colombia	Brazil Colombia	Mexico Brazil	Mexico Colombia
Allocentric	Travel with a small number of people	3.13	0.18	4.34	7.52	3.05	4.64
	Travel to adventurous destination	3.08	4.69	3.3	0.33	1.63	1.24
	Travel to different destinations for each trip	5.23	5.15	5.56	0.52	0.12	0.63
	Individually arranged travel	4.68	7.89	0.17	4.47	3.24	7.64
Psychocentric	Travel to popular destinations	0.98	4.77	6.62	5.8	3.87	2.1
	Package tour when I travel	0.87	4.47	2.8	2.01	3.68	1.53
	Travel with a large number of people	7.91	4.32	8.35	0.71	3.73	4.32
	Visit the same destinations	2.22	4.35	3.57	1.46	2.17	0.62

Critical Values of Studentized Range Distribution(q) for Familywise ALPHA = .05; *df=3.68.*

Considering the individual countries, the biggest differences were between Mexican and Portuguese students, students from Colombia and Portugal, and Portugal and Brazil. On the contrary, the smallest differences in tourist behavior were then measured in students from Brazil and Mexico. In the case of individual tourist behavior situations, the biggest differences were measured in the questions concerning "*Travel with a large number of people*" and "*Individually arranged travel*". Considerable differences were also measured for questions related to "Travel to popular destinations" and "*Travel with a small number of people*".

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationships between the four cultural attributes (HI, VI, HC, and VC) and each of the eight travel preferences (Tab. 4). Since the critical value of r was calculated as 0.15 (1-tailed; $\alpha = 0.05$), the correlations found are relatively weak. However, several significant connections between travel preferences and cultural tendencies were found. Interestingly, there was no significant correlation between any cultural tendency and any travel preference for the Portuguese student sample. For student samples from other countries, at least one relatively significant relationship between the cultural tendency and allocentric or psychocentric travel preference was found. The significance of these relationships will be discussed in the next part of the text.

Table 4 Correlation Coefficients of the Relationships Between Cultural Tendencies and Travel Preferences of Portugal, Brazilian, Mexican, and Colombian Students.

Cultural Tendency / Travel preference	HI	HC	VI	VC
Travel with a small number of people				
Portuguese	0.06	0.06	-0.03	-0.14
Brazilian	0.04	-0.02	-0.11	0.07
Mexican	0.04	0.01	0.02	-0.05
Colombian	-0.22	0.13	-0.07	0.17
Travel to adventurous destination				
Portuguese	0.12	0.02	-0.06	-0.09
Brazilian	0.05	0.12	-0.17	-0.16
Mexican	-0.04	0.10	-0.11	-0.08
Colombian	-0.07	-0.16	0.10	0.18
Travel to different destinations for each trip				
Portuguese	0.12	0.00	-0.12	0.03
Brazilian	0.09	-0.17	-0.07	-0.09
Mexican	-0.01	0.16	-0.19	-0.03
Colombian	-0.06	-0.04	0.09	0.00
Individually arranged travel				
Portuguese	0.03	0.02	-0.08	0.03
Brazilian	-0.22	0.11	0.04	0.00
Mexican	-0.01	0.08	0.03	-0.02
Colombian	-0.10	0.15	-0.03	-0.05
Travel to popular destinations				
Portuguese	0.14	-0.08	-0.08	0.08
Brazilian	-0.01	0.07	0.03	-0.06
Mexican	0.07	0.04	0.06	-0.17
Colombian	0.01	-0.01	-0.05	0.05
Package tour when I travel				
Portuguese	0.07	-0.09	0.00	0.09
Brazilian	0.03	-0.10	-0.04	0.16
Mexican	0.11	0.02	-0.04	-0.09
Colombian	-0.15	0.08	0.07	-0.01
Travel with a large number of people				
Portuguese	0.03	-0.08	0.03	0.07
Brazilian	0.14	-0.16	-0.07	0.09
Mexican	-0.03	-0.03	-0.01	0.04
Colombian	0.01	-0.02	0.08	-0.09
Visit the same destinations				
Portuguese	-0.01	-0.01	0.03	-0.03
Brazilian	0.02	0.12	-0.07	0.02
Mexican	-0.06	-0.05	0.22	-0.06
Colombian	0.06	-0.08	0.05	-0.02

Correlation is significant at the 0.14 level (1-tailed); $\alpha = 0.05$.

DISCUSSION

The presented research results helped to answer the set hypotheses and also brought some new challenges. The point is that the results do not correspond to any some extent to the current level of knowledge and will need to be further investigated. The individual findings will be discussed below.

The first hypothesis (**H1**), which claims that there is a statistically significant difference between the cultural tendencies of Brazilian, Colombian, Mexican, and Portuguese college students, was tested on the null hypothesis. First, the ANOVA test showed significant differences in cultural tendencies only in Horizontal Collectivism and Horizontal Individualism. Further testing with the Tukey-Kramer test showed that these differences occur between students from all countries, except for samples of students from Mexico and Colombia. The established hypothesis (**H1**) can thus be only partially confirmed, although the differences found are relatively significant.

Although hypothesis **H1 cannot be fully verified**, the findings support the significance of the Triandis model (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998), which, unlike the 6D model of Hofstede (2001), considers the horizontality and verticality of cultural dimensions. At the societal level, Hofstede's 6D model shows that the chosen countries are almost equal, both in terms of the collectivism dimension and the Power Distance Index dimension (t-Test, $p = 0.66$). These two categories are similar to the horizontal and vertical cultural models (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Our results show that at the individual level, the level of horizontality, except for Mexico and Colombia, varies considerably between all other countries. As the results also showed a significant difference between the results of the cultural dimensions at the societal and individual levels, further research should be made to provide data from cross-measurement on individual and societal levels.

Whereas in the case of cultural tendencies, the differences were measured only at the level of horizontalism, in the case of travel preferences, there were significant differences between all the countries examined. It was thus possible to reject the null hypothesis for the second established hypothesis (**H2**), as travel preferences differed significantly in all countries. The differences were observed at the dimensions of allocentrism and psychocentrism, as well as in the individual tourist situations. Hypothesis **H2** was thus **fully verified**.

It is also important to mention that measuring travel preferences according to Plog's model (1974) showed a slight preference for allocentric dimensions in all the countries studied. If a universal tourist were to be defined according to the results of the three most frequently

preferred travel situations for measured samples of students from all countries, then such a tourist would prefer the following situations (sorted by frequency from the highest): *"Travel to different destinations for each trip," "Travel to adventurous destination,"* and *"Travel with a small number of people."*

These findings are consistent with the assumptions of Sakakida et al. (2004), who argue that horizontal individualists are less likely to have psychocentric travel preferences. Similarly, vertical collectivism had a negative relationship with allocentric travel preferences (Sakakida et al., 2004). Given that the measured results showed the predominance of horizontal individualism in all samples of students from the studied countries, **our findings are in line with the existing theory** (e.g., Triandis & Gelfand, 1998; Mehmetoglu, 2004; Pizam & Sussmann, 1995; Pizam & Fleischer, 2005; Sakakida et al., 2004; etc.).

As mentioned above, when using Pearson's correlation coefficient, it was found that there are relatively significant relationships between the individual travel preferences of the examined student samples and their cultural tendencies. In this sense, using the null hypothesis, the third hypothesis **(H3) can be considered to be fully verified**. However, there are at least two limitations that appear to have a significant effect on the results of the performed correlation analysis. First, the critical value of r was calculated as 0.15 (1-tailed; $\alpha = 0.05$), so the correlations between individuals' cultural tendencies and their travel preferences were relatively weak, ranging from 0.16 to 0.22. Moreover, in some cases, e.g., for a sample of students from Brazil and Colombia, even a negative correlation was measured in the relationships where, according to the above-mentioned theoretical sources, there should be a strong positive correlation (Horizontal Individualism and *"Travel with a small number of people,"* and *"Individually arranged travel"*).

At this point, the article differs from most of the results of similar, previously published studies. In the case of the examined student samples, it was impossible to prove a significant connection between cultural tendencies and travel preferences. However, this may not be surprising, as some authors have previously pointed out that many other factors influence the individual behavior of tourists from different countries, such as varied ethnicities, social classes, ways of life, and other forms of behavior (McCleary et al., 2007; Ouellet, 2007). Also, in their study, Sakakida et al. (2004) aimed at understanding the relationship between travel preferences and students' cultural tendencies to horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism, found only relatively weak correlations.

Finally, our survey results found even stronger correlations in the case of the relationship between the language spoken by students from selected samples and their travel preferences

(correlation ranging from 0.11 to 0.21; r crit (2-tailed) = 0.0832). Similar results were also found for the relationship between gender and some forms of travel preferences. These findings may lead to a relatively strong claim that cultural tendencies do not directly affect the shape of individual tourist preferences. However, this statement could be significantly affected by the research limits that need to be mentioned. At least these limits were significant: a) Only student samples from four culturally similar countries were chosen for comparison; b) samples were collected in the capitals of the countries and within only one college per city; c) the age of the samples was limited by ranging from 17 to 29 years old; d) a questionnaire containing the minimum possible number of survey questions was used to determine students' cultural tendencies.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, our findings challenge the importance of the influence of cultural tendencies on the tourist behavior of individuals. Also, the findings have practical implications for tourism businesses and destination managers. Despite weak correlations between cultural tendencies and travel preferences, significant preference differences were observed among the student samples from Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Portugal. Tourism businesses and destination managers can utilize this information to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies to cater to the specific preferences of these student segments. Emphasizing unique and immersive experiences, community engagement, and cultural interactions can attract and satisfy students with allocentric preferences. Acknowledging the dominance of horizontal individualism suggests a preference for personalized and customizable travel experiences. Considering the cultural differences among the student samples, businesses can develop culturally relevant products and communication strategies. While these implications should be approached with caution due to study limitations, they serve as a starting point for businesses to understand and cater to the preferences of these student segments, enhancing their competitiveness and appeal.

Further research is needed to explore the specific correlations that emerged between horizontal/vertical individualism/collectivism and travel preferences among college students. This would allow for a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the contradictions with theoretical expectations. Additionally, investigating the influence of socio-demographic characteristics, personal preferences, and other cultural dimensions beyond individualism/collectivism would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in the relationship between cultural tendencies and tourist behavior. Expanding the research scope would contribute to a more comprehensive exploration of the

intricate interplay between culture and travel preferences among college students, addressing the current study's limitations and advancing our theoretical understanding in the field.

CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to determine if cultural differences exist between Brazilian, Colombian, Mexican, and Portuguese college students; if and how they are similar to the general cultural dimensions according to Geert Hofstede; if the college students from these countries differ in their travel preferences; examines if horizontal/vertical individualism, respectively collectivism, correlates with the students' travel preferences.

As our findings showed, there are significant differences in Horizontal Individualism/Collectivism and Vertical Individualism/Verticalism of the chosen samples of students from the chosen countries on the individual level. Although at the societal level, these are countries with a collectivist culture with a high Power Distance Index (Hofstede, 2001), at the individual level, horizontal individualism prevails among students from the given countries. However, our results proved that the student samples from chosen countries significantly differ only in the horizontality of their cultural tendencies. On the other hand, student samples showed significant differences in almost all cases of travel preferences. At the same time, allocentric preferences slightly prevailed over psychocentric ones in the given samples. These findings are in line with the current level of knowledge in the field.

On the other hand, the result failed in the aim to find a clear answer to the question of whether horizontal/vertical individualism, respectively collectivism, correlates with the students' travel preferences. Certain correlations were found, but all were very weak and, at the same time, in some cases contradicted the logic based on the theory. Thus, it can be argued that, given the limitations of the research, its results did not show a direct influence of cultural tendencies on the tourist behavior of the selected samples of students.

In light of the findings and the current level of knowledge, the question arises as to the significance of cultural differences in determining the tourism preferences of students. Our findings support the notion of exploring additional factors that may influence tourists' consumer behavior worldwide. At the very least, further research should be conducted to validate our findings while avoiding the influence of the above-mentioned limitations.

REFERENCES

Ahn, M. J., & McKercher, B. (2018). Hofstede's cultural indices revisited: The relationship between cultural values and international tourism. *Tourism Culture and Communication*, 18(4), 241-250.

Alden, D. L., Steenkamp, J. B. E., & Batra, R. (1999). Brand positioning through advertising in Asia, North America, and Europe: The role of global consumer culture. *Journal of Marketing*, 63(1), 75-87.

Ashraf, R., & Merunka, D. (2017). The use and misuse of student samples: An empirical investigation of European marketing research. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 16(4), 295-308.

Bello, D., Leung, K., Radebaugh, L., Tung, R. L., & van Witteloostuijn, A. (2009). From the editors: student samples in international business research, letter from the editors. *Journal of International Business Studies* (JIBS), 40(1), 1-5.

Bond, M. H. (1988). Finding universal dimensions of individual variation in multicultural studies of values: The Rokeach and Chinese value surveys. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 55(6), 1009.

Chen, F. F. (2013). Dimensions of Culture (Geert H. Hofstede)–Individualism and Collectivism. *The Encyclopedia of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 398-403.

Cleveland, M., & Laroche, M. (2007). Acculturaton to the global consumer culture: Scale development and research paradigm. *Journal of business research*, 60(3), 249-259.

Coles, T., Duval, D. T., & Hall, C. M. (2004). Tourism, mobility, and global communities: New approaches to theorising tourism and tourist spaces. In W. F. Theobald (ed.). Global tourism (pp. 463-481). Routledge.

Cruz-Milan, O. (2017). Plog's model of typologies of tourists. In L. L. Lowry (Ed.), *The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Travel and Tourism* (pp. 954–956). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Dann, G. (1993). Limitations in the use of nationality and country of residence variables. In D. Pearce, and R. Butler (eds.). *Tourism research: Critiques and challenges* (pp. 88-112). London: Routledge

Darwish, A. F. E., & Huber, G. L. (2003). Individualism vs collectivism in different cultures: A cross-cultural study. *Intercultural education*, 14(1), 47-56.

de Mooij, M., & Beniflah, J. (2017). Measuring cross-cultural differences of ethnic groups within nations: Convergence or divergence of cultural values? The case of the United States. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 29(1), 2-10.

Dwyer, L. (2004). Trends Underpinning Global Tourism in the Coming Decade. In W. F. Theobald (ed.) Global Tourism (pp. 529-545). Routledge.

Ezeuduji, I. O., November, K. L., & Haupt, C. (2016). Tourist profile and destination brand perception: the case of Cape Town, South Africa. *Acta Universitatis Danubius*. Œconomica, 12(4).

Flere, S., & Lavrič, M. (2008). On the validity of cross-cultural social studies using student samples. *Field methods*, 20(4), 399-412.

Goncalo, J. A., & Staw, B. M. (2006). Individualism–collectivism and group creativity. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 100(1), 96-109.

Goodwin, J. L., Williams, A. L., & Snell Herzog, P. (2020). Cross-Cultural Values: A Meta-Analysis of Major Quantitative Studies in the Last Decade (2010–2020). *Religions*, 11(8), 396.

Griffith, D. A., & Albanese, P. J. (1996). An examination of Plog's psychographic travel model within a student population. *Journal of Travel Research*, 34(4), 47-51.

Han, H., Kiatkawsin, K., Kim, W., & Lee, S. (2017). Investigating customer loyalty formation for wellness spa: Individualism vs. collectivism. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 67, 11-23.

Hofstede Insights. National culture (2016). (n.d.) https://www.hofstede-insights.com/models/national-culture/ Retrieved June 2, 2021

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*. Sage publications.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2005). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind (Vol. 2).* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Huang, S. S., & Crotts, J. (2018). Relationships between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and tourist satisfaction: A cross-country cross-sample examination. *Tourism Management*, 72, 232-241.

Keillor, B. D., D'Amico, M., & Horton, V. (2001). Global consumer tendencies. *Psychology and Marketing*, 18(1), 1-19.

Kim, C., & Lee, S. (2000). Understanding the cultural differences in tourist motivation between Anglo-American and Japanese tourists. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 9(1-2), 153-170.

Kim, M., White, C., & Kim, C. (2019). Examining relationships among cultural factors and expectations of CSR. *Journal of Communication Management*. 23, 427–443.

Kruger, M., & Snyman, W. Z. (2017). Segmenting the Latin American travel market to South Africa. *Acta Commercii*, 17(1), 1-18.

Li, X. R., Lai, C., Harrill, R., Kline, S., & Wang, L. (2011). When east meets west: An exploratory study on Chinese outbound tourists' travel expectations. *Tourism management*, 32(4), 741-749.

Litvin, S. W., & Smith, W. W. (2016). A new perspective on the Plog psychographic system. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 22(2), 89-97.

Litvin, S. W., Crotts, J. C., & Hefner, F. L. (2004). Cross-cultural tourist behaviour: a replication and extension involving Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 6(1), 29-37.

Lonner, W. J. (2000). On the growth and continuing importance of cross-cultural psychology. *Eye on Psi Chi*, 4(3), 22-26.

Macleod, D. (2006). Cultural commodification and tourism: a very special relationship. *Tourism Culture and Communication*, 6(2), 71-84.

McKercher, B., & Du Cros, H. (2003). Testing a cultural tourism typology. *International journal of tourism research*, 5(1), 45-58.

McCleary, K. W., Weaver, P. A., & Hsu, C. H. (2007). The relationship between international leisure travelers' origin country and product satisfaction, value, service quality, and intent to return. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 21(2-3), 117-130.

McCrae, R. R., & Terracciano, A. (2005). Personality profiles of cultures: aggregate personality traits. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 89(3), 407.

McSweeney, B. (2002). Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith-a failure of analysis. *Human relations*, 55(1), 89-118.

Mehmetoglu, M. (2004). A typology of tourists from a different angle. *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration*, 5(3), 69-90.

Meng, F. (2010). Individualism/collectivism and group travel behavior: a cross-cultural perspective. International Journal of Culture, *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 4(4), 340-351.

Merritt, R., Kline, C., Crawford, A., Viren, P., & Dilworth, G. (2018). Vacation activity preferences: An examination of generational differences across psychographic categories employing Plog's model. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 36(4).

Murray, G. R., Rugeley, C. R., Mitchell, D. G., & Mondak, J. J. (2013). Convenient yet not a convenience sample: Jury pools as experimental subject pools. *Social science research*, 42(1), 246-253.

Ouellet, J. F. (2007). Consumer racism and its effects on domestic cross-ethnic product purchase: An empirical test in the United States, Canada, and France. *Journal of Marketing*, 71(1), 113-128.

Özdemir, C., & Yolal, M. (2017). Cross-cultural tourist behavior: An examination of tourists' behavior in guided tours. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 17(3), 314-324.

Park, K. S., Reisinger, Y., & Kang, H. J. (2008). Visitors' motivation for attending the South Beach wine and food festival, Miami Beach, Florida. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 25(2), 161-181.

Park, S., Tussyadiah, I. P., Mazanec, J. A., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2010). Travel personae of American pleasure travelers: a network analysis. *Journal of travel & tourism marketing*, 27(8), 797-811.

Pizam, A., & Fleischer, A. (2005). The relationship between cultural characteristics and preference for active vs. passive tourist activities. *Journal of Hospitality and Leisure Marketing*, 12(4), 5-25.

Pizam, A., & Sussmann, S. (1995). Does nationality affect tourist behavior? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(4), 901-917.

Plog, S. C. (1974). Why destination areas rise and fall in popularity. *Cornell hotel and restaurant administration quarterly*, 14(4), 55-58.

Plog, S. C. (1991). *Leisure travel: making it a growth market.... again!* New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Reisinger, Y., & Turner, L. (1997). Cross-cultural differences in tourism: Indonesian tourists in Australia. *Tourism Management*, 18(3), 139-147.

Sakakida, Y., Cole, S. T., & Card, J. A. (2004). A cross-cultural study of college students' travel preferences: A value-oriented perspective. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 16(1), 35-41.

Shavitt, S., Torelli, C. J., & Riemer, H. (2011). Horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism: Implications for understanding psychological processes. In M. J. Gelfand, C.-y. Chiu, and Y.-y. Hong (Eds.), *Advances in culture and psychology: Vol. 1. Advances in culture and psychology* (p. 309–350). Oxford University Press.

Singelis, T. M., Triandis, H. C., Bhawuk, D. P., & Gelfand, M. J. (1995). Horizontal and vertical dimensions of individualism and collectivism: A theoretical and measurement refinement. *Cross-cultural research*, 29(3), 240-275.

Sivadas, E., Bruvold, N. T., & Nelson, M. R. (2008). A reduced version of the horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism scale: A four-country assessment. *Journal of Business Research,* 61(3), 201-210.

Smith, S. L. (1990). A test of Plog's allocentric/psychocentric model: Evidence from seven nations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 28(4), 40-43.

Soldatenko, D., & Backer, E. (2019). A content analysis of cross-cultural motivational studies in tourism relating to nationalities. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 38, 122-139.

Stewart, R. A. C. (1971). Cross-cultural personality research and basic cultural dimensions through factor analysis. *Personality*, 2, 45-72.

Tang, M., Werner, C., & Karwowski, M. (2016). Differences in creative mindset between Germany and Poland: The mediating effect of individualism and collectivism. *Thinking skills and creativity*, 21, 31-40.

Torres, E. N., Fu, X., & Lehto, X. (2014). Examining key drivers of customer delight in a hotel experience: A cross-cultural perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 36, 255-262.

Triandis, H. C. (1995). *Individualism and collectivism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Triandis, H. C., & Gelfand, M. J. (1998). Converging measurement of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 74(1), 118.

Triandis, H. C., Chen, X. P., & Chan, D. K. S. (1998). Scenarios for the measurement of collectivism and individualism. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, 29(2), 275-289.

Trompenaars, F. (1993). *Riding the waves of culture: Understanding cultural diversity in business*. London, UK: Brealey

Turner, L. W. (2003). *Cross-cultural behaviour in tourism: Concepts and analysis*. Elsevier.

Van de Vijver, F., & Leung, K. (1997). *Methods and data analysis of comparative research*. Allyn and Bacon.

Werner, O., & Campbell, D.T. (1970) Translating, Working through Interpreters, and the Problem of Decentering. In: Naroll, R. and Cohen, R., Eds., *A Handbook of Method in Cultural Anthropology*, American Museum of Natural History, New York, 398-420.

Woodside, A. G., Hsu, S. Y., & Marshall, R. (2011). General theory of cultures' consequences on international tourism behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, 64(8), 785-799.

Yu, Q., Yen, D.A., Cappellini, B., & Wang, C. (2021) 'From West to East: British Sojourners' acculturation in China.', *International marketing review*., 38 (4), 671-689.